

The Republican.

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TO THE REVEREND ROBERT HINDMARSH,
PRIEST OF THE SECT OF SWEDENBOR-
GIANS, OFFICIATING AT THE NEW JERU-
SALEM TEMPLE, SALFORD, MANCHESTER.

Dorchester Gaol, Nov. 14, Year 1823:

and the era of the decline of the spiri-
tual trade.

SPIRITUAL MAN!

MATERIALITY, infinite and eternal, against Spirituality, for
whatever stakes you will deposit!

I have just finished reading some of Emanuel Swedenborg's volumes and Mr. Clowes' Pamphlet "On the Two Worlds, the visible and invisible," and I feel additional astonishment at the foul credulity of mankind! I had thought, that the Christian Apocalypse was an experiment upon that credulity; but had the writer of that work been living, I should have thought that Swedenborg had made an experiment upon his credulity, a sort of Munchausen burlesque upon the spiritual rhodomontade of the Evangelist! Swedenborg and Munchausen were countrymen; and Germany seems to be the soil qualified for the growth of metaphysics, spiritual romance, and diseased imaginations.

From what I have read, I gather the doctrine of Swedenborg to be, that which Mr. Clowes, the late Rector of St. John's Church, Manchester, has put forth in his pamphlet, entitled "On the Two Worlds the visible and invisible:" though I shall be glad to be informed where he gets his information about that which is invisible. The answer will be: "The Bible and Swedenborg:" to which I reply, that they are both bad authorities. Swedenborg carries his spiritual visits much farther than any other spiritualist: he has out done Moses, St. John, and Mahomet! There is not a nook in heaven or hell but he has visited, and no spirit so foul but with whom he has conversed! In comparison with Sweden-

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borg, Johanna Southcote was a rational woman; and of all the Christian sects, whose tenets have come under my view, those of Swedenborg are the most preposterous. He had just cunning enough to add imposture to insanity. My conclusion of him is, that he first deceived himself with spiritual reveries, and then finding that he could deceive others by the same means, he proceeded to add imposture to his own delusions. In giving reasons for this conclusion, I shall first introduce the heads of Mr. Clowes' pamphlet, and then enlarge upon them by introducing the heads of a volume by Swedenborg, entitled "A Treatise concerning Heaven and Hell, and of the wonderful things therein."

Mr. Clowes thus introduces his subject: "All Christians are taught to believe in the existence of *two worlds*, which they are accustomed to distinguish by the names of the *visible world* and the *invisible world*. Thus they call the earth, with its inhabitants, its elements, its various productions, &c. &c. the *visible world*; whilst on the other hand they call heaven and hell with their inhabitants, their elements, productions, &c. &c. the *invisible world*. All Christians likewise are taught to believe further, at least, to make profession of a belief, that when they die, and are removed out of the *visible world*, they enter immediately into the *invisible world*, where they take up their eternal abodes either in the regions of bliss or of misery, according to the tenour of their past lives."

After a little skirmishing with some of the Christians, who do not believe exactly all that Swedenborg has said, Mr. Clowes goes on to say: "To guard the Christian Reader against the delusion of the above faith, and at the same time so to direct his understanding that he may acquire just and adequate ideas of the invisible world, its sure existence, its nearness, its close connection with the visible world, its great realities and the harmony subsisting between them and the shadows of things here below, is the principal design of the following treatise, in which it is proposed to shew: first, What is to be understood by the terms *visible* and *invisible*, when applied to worlds, and hence to demonstrate the following propositions?"

"1st. That all *visible* things derive their existence and thus proceed from things invisible, consequently the *visible world* derives its existence and proceeds from the *invisible world*.

"2ndly. That visible things imply the existence of things

invisible, consequently the *visible* world implies the existence of the *invisible*.

3dly. That *visible* things involve or contain in them things *invisible*, consequently the *visible* world involves and contains in it the *invisible* world.

4thly. That *visible* things make manifest, and thus demonstrate not only the existence of things *invisible*, but also their properties and qualities, consequently the *visible* world makes manifest and demonstrates, not only the existence of the *invisible* world, but also its properties and qualities.

5thly. That *visible* and *invisible* things mutually affect each other, consequently the *visible* and *invisible* worlds do the same.

6thly. That *visible* and *invisible* things are near to and connected with each other, and thus make one, consequently the *visible* and *invisible* worlds are near to and connected with each other and thus make one.

7thly. That therefore man, during his abode here below, is an inhabitant of both worlds, the *visible* and the *invisible*, and that according to the quality of his life, he builds his eternal house of happiness or of misery, in the *invisible* world; of happiness in heaven, if he lives according to the laws of divine order, and of misery in hell, if he disregards and rejects those laws.

Mr. Clowes goes on to define what he means by the words *visible* and *invisible*, of which definition it will be sufficient that I say, he makes them synonymous with the words *material* and *immaterial*. He also proceeds to what he calls a demonstration of each proposition; but at such a pretence to demonstration any reasonable man would blush! For instance: "He says: that man evidently consists of two parts, a body and soul, and asks who will pretend to say that the soul doth not exist because it is invisible." I do not merely pretend to say it; but I do say, *that man is one simple material substance, that he has no soul separate from his life, that nothing further is evident, and that beyond this there is no just pretence to make an assertion or to hint a probability.* It is not required of me to notice what Mr. Clowes calls his demonstration of his propositions: the fact is, he demonstrates nothing about his *invisible immateriality*, and builds entirely upon such assertions, as that I have quoted about the word *soul*. I shall therefore go on to copy the heads of a volume to which Mr. Clowes refers his readers for an enlargement upon the subject.

This volume is entitled: "A Treatise concerning Heaven and Hell, and of the wonderful things therein, as heard and seen, by the Honourable and Learned Emanuel Swedenborg, of the Senatorial Order of Nobles in the Kingdom of Sweden." The heads of this volume are as follows:

CONCERNING HEAVEN.

"That the Lord is God of Heaven:—That the Divinity of the Lord constitutes Heaven:—That the Divine Influx of the Lord in Heaven produces Love to him, and Charity to one another:—That Heaven is divided into Two Kingdoms:—That there are Three Heavens:—That the Heavens consist of innumerable societies:—That every Angelical Society is a Heaven in a lesser form, and every individual Angel a Heaven in the least form:—That the Universal Heaven in complex resembles a human form:—That every society in the Heavens resembles a human form:—That every Angel is in a perfect human form:—That Heaven, both in its whole and parts, resembles the human form; and that from the divine humanity of the Lord;—That there is a correspondence between all things in Heaven, and all things in Man;—That there is a correspondence between Heaven, and all things on Earth: Concerning the Sun in Heaven:—of light and heat in Heaven—Of the four quarters in Heaven:—Concerning the changes in the states of the Angels in Heaven:—Of Time in Heaven:—Of representatives and appearances in Heaven:—Of the garments in which the Angels appear to be clothed:—Of the Habitations and Mansions of the Angels;—Of Space in Heaven:—Of the form of Heaven, according to which are regulated the Angelical Consociations and Communications: of the Governments in Heaven:—Of Divine Worship in Heaven:—Of the power of Angels:—Of the speech of Angels:—Of the conversation of the Angels with man:—Of writings in Heaven:—Concerning the wisdom of the Angels of Heaven:—Of the state of innocence in the Angels:—Concerning the state of peace in Heaven:—Of the conjunction of Heaven with men:—Of the conjunction of Heaven with man by the word:—That Heaven and Hell are from mankind:—Concerning the Gentiles, or People without the Church in Heaven:—Of Infants or little children in Heaven:—Of the wise and the simple in Heaven:—Of the Rich and Poor in Heaven:—Of Marriage in Heaven:—Of functions of the Angels in Heaven:—Of the joys and happiness of Heaven:—Of the Immensity of Heaven."

"Of the world of Spirits and of the State of man after death."

"What is meant by the world of Spirits:—That every man is a spirit as to the inner man:—Of man's being raised from death, and his entrance into immortality: That man after death, is in a perfect human form:—That man, after death, retains every sense, as also the same memory, thoughts, and affections, which he had in this world, and leaves nothing behind him but his terrestrial body:—That the condition of man after death is according to his past life here:—That the delights of every one's life are changed after death to things corresponding thereto:—Of man's first state after death:—Of the second state of man after death:—Of the third state of man after death, which is the state of instruction for those that go to Heaven:—That no one is appointed for Heaven by an immediate act of mercy:—That it is not so difficult a thing to live for Heaven as some suppose."

"CONCERNING HELL."

"That Hell is under the Lord's Government:—That the Lord casts none into Hell, but that the Spirits cast themselves into it:—That all who are in the Hells, are in the very principle of evil, and in opposition to truth from the love of self, and the love of the world:—What is meant by Hell-fire and gnashing of teeth:—Of the malignity and wicked devices of the infernal spirits: Of the appearance, situation and plurality of the Hells: of the equilibrium betwixt Heaven and Hell:—That the Liberty or Free Will of man, is from the equilibrium that subsists between Heaven and Hell."

Now, Mr. Hindmarsh, I have addressed myself to you, because, I am informed, that you, are the person to whom the Swedenborgians and others will look up for an answer to what I have to say to, and of your sect. I am also informed that among your sect I am called "*a mere groveller in nature*;" but I will shew to you, that Swedenborg, and those who follow him, are less than that, and that they are *unnatural grovellers, beastalized man*, that they are not worthy to rank even with the mass of mankind, depraved, ignorant and contemptible as they are. That your sect has not the least claim to rationality, and that no one of them can be a rational being.

Swedenborg has deprecated the doctrine of the Trinity, in so far as the Godhead is said to consist of three persons,

but he has, in his arithmetic, committed still greater blunders if possible, than the abused Trinitarians. He says: There is one Heaven and that the one Heaven is like a man: that *that* man or heaven is made up of the divinity of the Lord: that the Lord is God of that Lord: that Heaven is divided into two kingdoms: that this one heaven and two kingdoms are three heavens: that this one heaven, two kingdoms, and three heavens, consist of innumerable societies, and that every individual of every society is also a heaven! which, in English, means, that the individual contains the heaven and the heaven contains all the individuals! that the whole is one human form and that every part is one human form! He treats of time in heaven and tells us that there is no time in heaven! He treats of space in heaven, and tells us that there is no space in heaven, and yet that heaven has four quarters and is of immense extent! You may tell me, that I do not understand "spiritual things:" I confess my ignorance: but I understand that when a writer is repeatedly contradicting himself, he is either knave or fool. God himself has been challenged to reconcile an evident contradiction, and that by those who have called themselves Christians! When we are told that the Lord casts none into Hell on account of his mercy; but that the evil spirits cast themselves into this place of torment, as a matter of conscience, and still continue to perform there, one among another, all their evil tricks, what can be thought of the man who has put this on paper? And what can be thought of those who can support such an abuse of words? You may spiritualize your words and your meanings as much as you please, but here on earth, at least, we shall be justified in trying your words by the test of common sense.

In one sense, Swedenborg has done nothing more than to allegorize the moral principles which he saw in existence among mankind, and in fact the whole that he has written may be allegorically applied to the moral and physical condition of mankind as they exist at present, which, were it not the most absolute nonsense so to attempt to instruct them, would at least form some kind of excuse for such writings. He was so much of a *groveller in nature* as to be incapable of inventing any thing new in the way of character for the airy inhabitants of his invisible or spiritual world. He has every where borrowed his similies from what he saw in existence about him, and this is one proof of his imposture. If he talked with Angels, good or bad, and it appears he conversed with them at his own discretion,

he always talked upon some subject that was a common topic of conversation among mankind. He no where introduces a sublimity of language: he has no where added to the stock of moral instruction, such as we have fair reason to expect from a man of his pretensions, I can see by his portrait as well as by his writings, that he was a silly, weak-headed man, possessing a little low cunning, and fond of deceiving himself as well as others.

As a specimen of the low grovelling state of the mind of Swedenborg, I will quote a few pages from his writings. First, where he treats "Of Divine worship in Heaven."

"Divine worship in Heaven is not unlike that on earth, as to the external part, though with regard to the internal there is a difference, they have their doctrines, their preachings, and their temples as we have; and their doctrines in all essential points perfectly agree together, but of more interior wisdom in the superior heavens than in the inferior, and their preachings are according to their doctrines: and as they have houses and palaces, so likewise have they temples to preach in. That these things are so in the Heavens, is because the Angels continually advance to higher degrees of perfection in wisdom and love, for they have understanding and will like men, and those are capable of such proficiency, the understanding in intellectual truths, and the will in the various species of Good arising from love.

"But the true Divine Worship is not considered in the Heavens, as consisting in frequenting the temples, and hearing preachings; but in a life of love, charity, and faith, according to the doctrines received, preaching serving only as the means of instruction in things pertaining to life. I have conversed with the Angels on this subject, and told them, that it is the general belief in this world, that Divine Worship consists only in frequenting the churches, hearing sermons, receiving the sacrament of the supper three or four times a year, and observing other rites instituted by the church, together with attending at the public prayers with reverence and devotion: to which the Angels replied, that these external things ought to be observed, but that they availed nothing, if they did not proceed from an inward good principle, and that this consisted in a life according to sound doctrine.

"That I might be an eye-witness to the manner of their assemblies in their Temples, I have been indulged with permission to enter there, and hear the preachings. *The preacher stands in a pulpit on the East side; before him*

sit those who are most eminent for wisdom, and on each hand such as are inferior in this respect: they sit in something of a circular form, so that all can see the face of the preacher, but no one so as to be out of sight: at the gate, which is on the East side of the Temple, to the left of the pulpit, stand those who are in the degree of the newly initiated; but no one is allowed to stand behind the pulpit, for should any one do so, it would confuse the preacher, as would also be the case, should any one present dissent from his doctrine, and if this were to happen, such a one would be obliged to turn away his face from the minister. The preachings there are fraught with such sublime instruction, as is not to be equalled in this world so greatly superior is their wisdom. Their Temples in the Spiritual Kingdom appear to be constructed of stone, and of wood in the Celestial and that because stone corresponds to truth, for the investigation of which the Angels of the former are more distinguished; and wood to the principle of Good, which is more eminently the characteristic of the Angels in the latter; nor are they called Temples in the latter, but the House of God. In the Celestial Kingdom their structures are without magnificence; but in the Spiritual, not without a greater or lesser degree of it.

“I had some discourse with one of their Preachers concerning the pious disposition of their hearers during their assemblies, who said, that the degree of piety, devotion, and holiness in every one, was in proportion to his love and faith within, as all sanctity is from the internal presence and grace of the Lord, and that without these he could not see what an apparent external sanctity availed; and then reflecting a little on the latter, he farther added, that there might be something like sanctity in the outward practice and behaviour, either acquired artificially, or assumed in hypocrisy, but that without the internal of holiness in the heart, all was no better than a false fire kindled by the love of self, and to catch the praise of man.

“All the preachers are of the Lord's Spiritual Kingdom, for none belong to his Celestial; and the reason of this is, because in the former they are in the province of Truth from Good, and all preaching must be from Truths; whereas in the Celestial Kingdom, they are all in the province of the Good of Love, which principle gives them an intuitive perception of all Truths, so that they have no occasion to discourse of them; however, notwithstanding, they are not without their public instruction, as well for illustration of the Truths they already

know, as to enrich them with a farther increase, which as, soon as offered, they own and perceive, without speculating or reasoning upon them; and what they so perceive they graft in their hearts, and bring forth in their lives, it being usual with them to say; that to live according to his Truths, is to love the Lord.

All the preachers are of the Lord's appointment; and accordingly endowed with the gift of preaching, nor are any others allowed to teach in their Temples: they are called preachers, and not priests, and that because the Celestial kingdom is the priesthood of heaven, for as much priesthood signifies the Good of Love to the Lord, in which are all the Angels of that kingdom; whereas the Spiritual Kingdom is called the Royalty of Heaven, for the Royal or Kingly office signifies Truth as proceeding from Good.

"The doctrines on which their preaching is grounded have, all of them, respect to life and practice, and none to believing only, as separate from life; the doctrine taught in the third or inmost Heaven is more replete with wisdom than that of the Middle Heaven; and the latter more highly intellectual than that of the Lowest Heaven; for the doctrines in each are adapted to the perceptions and capacities of the Angels therein respectively; and it is an essential point in all their doctrines to inculcate the belief of the Lord's Divine Humanity.

Swedenborg tells us, that the angels have houses and temples in heaven built with stone and wood; but he has forgotten to tell us the difference between *natural* and *spiritual* stone and wood; and by all appearances, in his heavens, there must be all sorts of work performed as on earth: but I, for one, had hoped, that there would be an end to toil and labour with this life! It may be seen at the first view of the above chapter of his writings, that Swedenborg was made up of a mixture of imposture and delusion; and that his was a mind of a superlatively grovelling quality. Not sublime like Milton, nor profound like Locke; but a spiritually depraved mind. He spiritualized the very vices of mankind, and has made them eternal as far as his word goes. Desirous of being a moralist, he mistook the way, and depraved the doctrine and the science of morality. He tells us that there are preachers in Heaven: but what need can he show for them, since it is a folly to preach to an individual or to a body of individuals upon any subject of which they are previously well acquainted. For pastime, it cannot be necessary, for he says there is no time known in heaven. For

instruction, it cannot be necessary, for he says knowledge is equal in each society of Angels! Again, *there is something so ludicrous about the position of the pulpit, the form of congregation, and about the impropriety of standing behind the pulpit, lest the spiritual preacher should be confused, that it must strike every rational mind, that, in this instance, as well as in every other on which he has treated, Swedenborg has merely conveyed, in a spiritual disguise, his notions as to how matters should be managed in this visible world.*

I will make another short quotation from his chapter. "Of Writings in Heaven. As speech is a property belonging to angels, and as their speech consists of words, so also have they *writing* among them, whereby they express their thoughts, as well as by words: sometimes I have had sent to me papers accurately written, exactly resembling our manuscripts, and some appeared as if printed; I was able to read them, but could seldom pick out any meaning from them, (how exactly like his own writings!) as it is not according to the divine order that man should receive instruction from Heaven by any other writings than the sacred scriptures, as these are the instituted means of communication between heaven and earth, and therefore between the Lord and man."

Here it may be asked, as Swedenborg makes his angels to be human beings dead and spiritualized, whether they could write before letters were invented among mankind, and which has the claim to prior knowledge, as to the use of the printing press and many other things, the natural or the spiritual world. Swedenborg's was a narrow mind. He saw nothing beyond the circle in which he lived, and I would desire no better evidence to overthrow the whole doctrine of spirits than Swedenborg, the great Spiritualist, has introduced into his writings.

The quotations which I have already made are in character with the whole of his writings, and, after I have noticed that Swedenborg established a spiritual language, by the use of correlative words for those in common use, making one word or term to be but a type of its different correlatives: that he professed to hold conversation with all sorts of spirits, and with whomsoever he pleased, pretending to exchange messages between the dead and the living, I hasten to get out of his spiritual world, for the purpose of destroying it. I cannot peruse such writings without feeling deep grief, to think, *that such impostures should meet with cor-*

responding credulity among mankind. With Christians, to impose is a virtue; to expose an imposture—a crime.

The whole question turns upon, whether there be *an invisible world*, and what is *immateriality*. The Chaplain of this Gaol, having lent me “Drew’s Essay on the Immateriality and Immortality of the Human Soul,” on returning it I asked him how he defined, or what he defined *immateriality* to be. This question was enough to refute the contents of the whole book. He hesitated, and, after some reflection, replied, that, he could only say it was the opposite of materiality. This was enough. I told him that *materiality* was *something*, and *immateriality*, upon his definition, expressed its opposite, or—*nothing*! Mr. Clowes’ invisible or immaterial world has the same high claim, and relates to—*nothing*! Swedenborg’s *angels and spirits, spiritual stones, spiritual wood, spiritual writing, spiritual printing, spiritual paper, and spiritual ink, all relate to—NOTHING*! They were the phantoms of his imagination, and out of his body had no existence. He *indeed* was that human form which contained the whole spiritual world! Had he not written and made converts to his delusions, *his heaven would have been extinguished with his life.*

The reveries about spirits have arisen upon the ignorance of what is matter. Had not the nonsense, the mischievous, miserable nonsense, about spirits, been erected in an age of gross ignorance, the delusion could not originate and gain any ascendancy in the present state of increased knowledge as to the chemical properties of matter. The people of former ages saw, that matter of various kinds vanished into something they knew not what, and hence arose their notions about spirits and ærial evanescent forms. The notions about spirits should have been relinquished immediately when the gaseous properties of matter were discovered; and so they would have been, had not an extensive revenue been associated with them. They must eventually be given up, as it is quite clear that they are indefensible. There is not a Priest in existence, who has the slightest knowledge of the present state of the science of Chemistry, but would be alarmed and tremble at the idea of defending his spiritual notions before an opponent who had a similar knowledge. You, Mr. Hindmarsh, will have an opportunity of contradicting what I say, if you please.

Every species of matter, whether animal, vegetable, or mineral, can be reduced to what the spiritualist calls a spirit, and what the chemist call a gas. The uninitiated may be

informed, that gas means an air, resembling that which is called the atmosphere, or what they understand under the common term of *air*. There are different kinds of gas, or air, and every body, that is every species of matter, animal, vegetable or mineral, is fed by the one or the other, and is in a constant state of change, that is of changing the qualities of the different substances, whether solid or fluid, by which it is surrounded and supported. Every substance, be it what it may, produces its atmosphere, upon the very same principle, as the earth on which we live produces its atmosphere. This atmosphere is the result of the continual motion of matter, and of the continual action of one species upon another species of matter. There is nothing at rest; every thing known to man is in the most active motion: the most sluggish animal, the fixed vegetable or mineral, is in a state of great internal action, and incessantly changing its parts: the principle even extends to a dead animal or vegetable; and every dense body becomes an eventual fluid or ærial body, and so on, continually changing from the one to the other. All this is demonstrable by a species of demonstration different to that which Mr. Clowes talks about for his soul and invisible world: and this once seen, all notions of souls and spirits must vanish, and Swedenborg's doctrine become what Swedenborg's body is now—if not distinguishable by a careful preservation—lost in the universe of matter. There are no marks of identity but in fixed and dense bodies, and all identity is temporary and mortal. **THERE IS NO IMMORTAL IDENTITY.** A correct knowledge of this is the most happy state of mind that a man can enjoy, because, he is then free from all cares about the future, and is in a proper state to improve himself for the benefit of the present. The improvement of his condition in this life becomes his only aim, as it is his only duty.

Swedenborg says, that the whole of heaven is in the human form, and that each part is a distinct human form! Ridiculous as such a notion is, it is allegorically correct, upon the principle that the whole of moral good and evil belongs to the human race. It is here, and here only, that the writings of Swedenborg can be defended, and this, I presume, his defenders will scoff at. Upon the principle of spirits, it is passing ridiculous. He has not told us whether the spirits are Germans or Africans in appearance, or whether they vary in colour as the human race on the earth, or become all of one colour.

Supposing, that we were to burn a human body, burn it

thoroughly, and leave not a particle of ashes behind; what would you then say about the spirit, Mr. Hindmarsh? This can be done and done quickly. From what would the spirit arise: at what time would it quit the body? Suppose a body drowned and eaten by the fishes: what then becomes of the spirit? Suppose it murdered and eaten by cannibals: what then becomes of the spirit? Suppose it to rot gradually in the earth, become food for worms, and slowly to mix with the earth and its atmosphere, what then becomes of the spirit? Try the matter any way, and you will find your notion of immortal spirits to be wholly a delusion.

The elementary bases of the human body are gases resembling those which are the elementary bases of all other matter. We trace it to the semen of the human body. Out of the semen of the sexes commixed in the female's womb arises an organization which becomes a human body. During the one half of the period of gestation, the embryo is an insensate mass; and sensation is communicated to it at the time of quickening, as if by an electric shock; in fact, precisely upon the same principle. Sensation begun, life is begun; and when sensation ceases, life ceases. The frame of the mother grows incapable of any longer sustaining her growing burthen, and the infant bursts from its prison, and is thrown off from its parent, by the united efforts of the whole maternal frame. The principle of generation and procreation is precisely the same with every other viviparous animal, and if pain be an evil, and nature a *designing power*, it can scarcely be impious to ask why all animals were not created viviparous. I take the organization to be perfect at the mid-time of gestation, and that its fluids then begin to circulate in perfection as those of a distinct machine; but what do we see of a spirit? Where or at what time does what is called the spirit join the body? whence does it proceed? what is it? Answer me in those things, and do not say that spirit is incomprehensible to all but such silly weak-headed men as Swedenborg. That which is inconceivable, that which is incomprehensible, is not a matter for us to talk or write about. Individuals may very properly make private speculations into the processes—the means and the end of nature, but communication between individuals should be confined wholly to what one of the parties knows something about. Where both are ignorant of the subject of discussion, both must go on in error: and it is from this error, that almost every species of human quarrel originates.

We have traced the human body from the sexual semen to its existence as a distinct being, let us follow it through life to an old age and to death.

The infant is born, and from its cries we may gather, that its first sensations on being separated from its mother are those of pain occasioned by the joint struggle for birth and life. No other sensations exhibits itself, until it has exercised that of the taste, from its contact with the mother's breast. It has eyes, ears, and nasal organs, but so far from those being designed for any purpose, it is evident that it is only from the necessitating influence of surrounding circumstances, that they are brought into use. The new born infant is a blank designed for nothing, but capable of being cultivated. Let the wife of a Planter and a Negro slave exchange infants at birth; let the Negress suckle the white infant, and the Planter's wife the young Negro; let the former be trained as a slave without education, without apparel, and with bad food, and the latter well fed, well clothed, and well educated, and it would soon be seen that good management and education made all the difference of character. There is no soul to work an influence; 'tis cultivation that makes the whole difference. There is no design in the matter, beyond that which proceeds from the respective parents. If there was design, may we not justly upbraid it for having caused so much misery, and for having so long kept the human race in a more painful aggregate condition than that of any other species of animals? Why has not the design unfolded to former generations that high state of cultivation to which some of the present have arrived? If the doctrine of spirits was valid, it would follow, that the human character would need no cultivation; for it may be presumed, at least, that this soul or spirit, which is said to be immortal, and to have existed from all eternity, must always have possessed the same amount of knowledge. There is no position which you can take with this doctrine of spirits, but from which you may be easily driven.

Let us see the infant beginning to utter other sounds than those of crying and complaint: let us consider its first joyful sounds, and enquire whence it comes. You will not find it before it has been fed, nor until it has felt the difference of a state of warmth and fullness of stomach from a state of cold and hunger. These are the first sensations, and these form the first ideas. Here, neither eyes, nor nose have any thing to do with the sensations. The child must be many weeks old before it can learn to desire the breast from sight.

And it must have felt the difference between pleasure and pain, before it utters a joyful sound, before even a smile appears on its countenance. As yet, we see nothing of the soul or spirit.

Let us see its powers of sight brought into action, which is a work of months before it can distinguish objects and mark identity, beyond the breast of the mother. If its powers of vision be perfect, it is evidently a species of study and practice, by which it exercises and derives benefit from them: if imperfect, the mind, the faculty of comparison and reason, is cultivated with much more difficulty, and with a certain degree of imperfection. The soul or spirit is nowhere to be found as a substitute for the eyes: as every idea is evidently the result of experiment, either visual or sensitive.

If the infant be deaf, it necessarily remains dumb, as it can only utter sounds in imitation, by hearing those of others and those of its own. Where then is the soul or spirit to make up for this deficiency?

Let us look at a perfect infant, one with every faculty sound: let us see it beginning to talk and move without the help of its nurse. How is speech or language communicated to it? If a soul or spirit had any thing to do in the matter, we might suppose, that there would have been a universal language, or a language of spirits: but what is the fact? A child takes the language of those who nurse it, and from a dumb nurse it would take no language, it would be brought up as dumb as its nurse: a case sufficient to prove, that speech, so far from being a distinguishing mark of a soul or spirit, and design, is wholly a matter of human ingenuity. A fact, which strikes at the whole of Swedenborg's spiritual world. Any animals that could utter the same sounds may be taught the same powers of speech as man, of which different birds afford a proof: but I know of no such animal, of any other species, though I am of opinion that cultivation would improve the condition and character of many.

As to the tastes or habits of a healthy child, they are evidently communicated by the nurse, in the first instance, and by those with whom it associates, in the second instance; though, that communication is a matter which passes unnoticed, unless there be a shrewd and discerning observer near the parties. Bad tastes may be properly termed a species of bad cultivation; but there is no remedy for this matter but in a more extensive education, and where the nurse shall be made fully sensible how the child receives its impressions

and character from her manners towards it. An angry, fretful mother, with a healthy child, would be almost sure to produce that character upon her child; and, though much is the result of organization and health, there is more to be attributed to example. One bad passion generated unnoticed, and even unintentional, may lead on to a life of pain and misery. The same necessary caution applies to the school-master, and to whomsoever any part of the education of youth is entrusted. It is only by an equalization of knowledge, in the highest degree, that vice can be restrained and crime diminished; and the opponents of free discussion may take upon themselves the characters of being the abettors of no small portion of the crime that is now committed.

In no part of the education of the child and youth can we find any benefit derived from this pretended soul or spirit. We every where see that every idea is the result of an impression made by some external object; and that, without the aid of those faculties which distinguish these external objects, the child would know nothing.

The only difference between childhood and manhood is, that the former, having fewer ideas, has more need of an enforced education; whilst the latter, by experiencing the benefits of knowledge, pursues it of its own accord. But no where can we see any thing of soul or spirit at work: no one benefit possessed separate from those acquired by instruction or research.

Old age comes on, the body sinks, decays, becomes worn out: in some instances a vigorous mind is retained, but in most the acquired ideas are lost or grow feeble with the decaying faculties of the body, and life recedes only as the machine becomes unfit to keep up a circulation of the necessary fluids. Its motion is checked, that is *death*: but where or what is the soul or spirit, since sensation has made up the whole of life and character, and since that sensation has been evidently the result of an action of external bodies upon the fluids of the body. Say ye Spiritualists! say Mr. Hindmarsh, in what do you distinguish spirit? Describe it: exhibit it; or cease to use a *word* for which you have no *thing* as a relation.

The body dead—let us burn or bury it, and in either case we can see clearly how it mingles with the surrounding elements: the burning is merely a hastening of that process which the more objectionable mode of leaving the body to rot produces: it is a more speedy and more wholesome decomposition of that, the speedy decomposition of which is

most desirable ; as dead and putrid animal matter is calculated to generate disease among that which is living. In this, as in every other matter, my propensities are regulated upon the principle of utility to living animals, and more particularly towards those of my own species.

You, Mr. Hindmarsh, may call this a *mere grovelling in nature* ; it is there only that I desire to grovel ; and let me remind you, that he who grovels out of nature is a fool for his pains, and he who leads others to do it, *is a knave* : because out of nature he can neither know any thing, nor communicate knowledge to others. Your spiritual knowledge is the most gross ignorance, and worse than ignorance, for it is the most rank delusion and imposture. I publicly challenge you to the defence of the doctrine of spirits. I publicly challenge Mr. Clowes to the demonstration of his invisible world ; upon any principle of probability, connected with the present state of knowledge upon the properties of matter.

I have as yet said nothing to you about the Bible or the Christian doctrines ; but I also publicly challenge you to the defence of any part or particle of Christianity, upon any one of its bearings. I tell you, that it is neither true in history, nor in physics ; and I further tell you, that it is not even moral. You can have no fair excuse in shrinking from a discussion with me, on any one of the points on which I have challenged you. I, who deny the whole of your spiritual notions, am your only proper opponent. You may cavil to no purpose throughout life with a Christian, who will meet you at half the way you desire him to go ; but with me there can be no cavil, I seek proof of every thing. I can see the foundation of the whole of Swedenborg's error ; therefore, I can easily unravel it. He never for a moment suffered himself to mistrust the more than human pretensions of the Bible. He took every thing for granted that he found in it, and, as I have expressed in my letter to Mrs. Fry, "on a foundation of error, he built a fabric of error, and dwelt in it throughout life." You are now fairly opposed, if you have honesty defend your doctrines. And not only you, but through this address to you, I challenge every living Swedenborgian.

RICHARD CARLILE.

LIBERATION OF MARY ANN CARLILE!

MR. PEEL has, at length, settled the amount of the five hundred pounds worth of imprisonment on my sister: and that when he was told by the Magistrates, that the unwholesome place to which they had removed her, and the state of her health, would not admit any further amount of suffering to be extracted from the victim, if her life was to be spared. She left the Gaol on Saturday the 15th instant, being the completion of two years imprisonment for having published a pamphlet which said the Christian Religion had no foundation in truth. The following is the copy of her discharge warrant.

TO MISS MARY ANN CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL.

MADAM, Court of King's Bench, Nov. 14, 1823.
His Majesty having been pleased to remit the fine imposed upon you by the Court of King's Bench. I have to inform you that upon delivering the enclosed* to the Gaoler he will Discharge you as to your Commitment under the sentence of the Court.

I remain, your obedient Servant,

PERE DEALTRY.

* FRIDAY NEXT AFTER THE MORROW OF SAINT MARTIN, IN THE FOURTH YEAR OF KING GEORGE THE FOURTH.

LONDON: THE KING AGAINST MARY ANN CARLILE.

UPON reading the entry of satisfaction upon the Record of the judgement in this prosecution, it is ordered, that the Defendant Mary Ann Carlile be discharged out of custody as to her commitment by virtue of the rule of this Court made in this Prosecution, on Thursday next after the morrow of Saint Martin in the second year of his present Majesty's Reign.

Side Barr,

BY THE COURT.

THE FOLLOWING IS THE ANSWER TO MR.
CARLILE'S AFFIDAVIT PUBLISHED IN THE
LAST NUMBER OF "THE REPUBLICAN."

TO MR. R. CARLILE DORCHESTER GAOL.

SIR,

Court of King's Bench, Nov. 15, 1823.

I HAVE laid your affidavit (forwarded to me) before all the Judges of the Court of King's Bench, and they have desired me to intimate to you that they are of opinion that it does not furnish sufficient ground for granting the Writ of Habeas Corpus you require.

I am, Sir, your obedient Servant,

PERE DEALTRY.

The following Chapters are from the pen of an Edinburgh Friend, who has lately published his "Critical Remarks on the Truth and Harmony of the Four Gospels," to which he purposes to add another part, under the following head:—

OBSERVATIONS ON THE INSTRUCTIONS
GIVEN BY JESUS CHRIST.

CHAP. I.

Remarks on Christ's employment in his youth, and on his abilities as a Mechanic in comparison with others, with reflections.

THE worshippers of Jesus Christ have taught, that he executed the offices of a prophet, a priest, and a king; but this is false in every respect, he executed none of these offices whatever: it is clear that he never possessed any kingly power, he entirely disowned it; and instead of being a priest, he would have no connexion with them; the whole of his instructions tended to undermine their authority, and abolish their office; and he was equally as unfortunate in his character of a prophet, for none of his predictions were correctly fulfilled.

Instead of executing these offices, he rather attempted to perform the duties of a mechanic, a reformer, and a teacher; and since these are the characters he assumed, we may examine what

he has done for mankind in these professions, and compare him with others who have been engaged in the same undertaking.

It is plain to every impartial observer, that the time he spent working as a carpenter was completely lost; it has been of no benefit for the improvement of the human race; if he was the Son of God and came to the world to reform mankind, and lead them to salvation, he ought not to have spent so many years of precious time after he was come, before commencing his labour, he ought not to have allowed them to go on in vice and crime for so many years, without giving them any public instruction; the younger he was when he began to teach in public, he would have been the greater prodigy, his followers would have admired him the more on that account, and he himself was afterwards fond of working wonders. The time that he wrought as a carpenter, has been of no benefit for the improvement of man in any of the mechanical arts; we know not of any good that has ever been produced by that work more than by the labour of any other common workman. It does not appear that he discovered any new invention in carpentry, nor did he explain any new principle in mechanics, to point out the way to future improvement. He did not discover or explain the mechanical powers of the lever, the pulley, the wheel and axle, the inclined plane, the screw, the wedge, and the funicular machine. He did not discover the printing press, that best of human inventions for spreading instruction and knowledge throughout the world, he did not discover the steam engine, which has been, and is likely to be, of such extensive benefit in the arts, nor the crane so useful in masonry. He did not discover clocks and watches, nor yet the mariner's compass, which were so necessary, and have been of so much utility: he did not perfect ship-building, wind and water mills, threshing mills, spinning mills, nor the weaver's loom: neither did he perfect the more simple, but equally useful, implements of the cart and the plough, it is not to him that we owe any of the numerous inventions of ancient or modern times, which have abridged the labour, improved the condition, and promoted the civilization of man; we know not of any one discovery or improvement that he made in the mechanical arts, and may well conclude that the time was but ill spent, when we can discover no benefit arising from the labour.

Since he pretended to be the Son of God and wrought so long as a carpenter, he ought even in that trade to have done something to benefit mankind worthy of his character or pretensions something to prove that he was a superior being and come for their good. So exalted a being should have shewn himself superior to all other men in mechanical genius, yet it does not appear that he was superior to any ordinary mechanic of his time, and he was immeasurably inferior to many. He cannot stand a comparison with Archimedes, Vitruvius, and others among the ancients; with Arkwright, Smeaton, Watt, and Rennie; with Lagrange, Prony, or Brunelle; with

Meikle Tulton or even with Thomas Paine; he cannot be compared with these, besides many other engineers and mechanics of modern times, if he could not equal any of these great men in mechanical inventions, if he could not in so many years make some discoveries for the improvement of the arts, this proves that his genius was inferior to theirs, and that he had no claim to the exalted character which his worshippers have given him.

Since we can find nothing that Jesus did to improve mankind in any of the useful arts, we may next consider what he has done for them as a reformer and a teacher, his fame being raised upon this character we ought to consider both the doctrines which he taught, and the instructions which he gave, with great attention.

The character which he claimed and which his followers have given him, may suggest the reflection, that if he came to the earth to reform the human race, to deliver them from a state of sin and misery, and lead them to salvation, he ought to have commenced his labour without delay; and performed it in the most effectual manner; instead of working as a mechanic, or spending his time for no useful purpose he ought rather by his almighty power to have reformed the vicious habits and corrected the imperfect organization of the human frame, or if this was more than he could perform, if he could only employ ordinary means for reforming the world, he might have been much better employed in writing and promulgating a code of mild, just, and perfect laws, for the regulation of mens conduct in society, such laws as would have been a guide to both rulers and people, such as would have prescribed the just punishment due to crimes of every kind, and the rewards due to merit or virtue, if these are necessary.

His labours would have been of more benefit if he had written and promulgated clear and practicable instruction for the prevention of crime, and the direction of the moral conduct of mankind, suited to their various conditions in the world, defining correctly the duties of the different members or classes of society to one another; and since a religion is so necessary to guide men through this chequered life, he might have been well employed in forming a perfect system of theology, defining clearly the articles of faith most necessary for them to believe, describing plainly the form of worship most pleasing to God, since worship is so necessary to please him.

A work of this kind, written in a clear and perspicuous manner, embracing all our duties public and private, moral and religious, would have been of more benefit than his labours as a carpenter, or his strolling about the country working wonders, a perfect work of this description would have been of much value, and might have corrected many of the evils arising out of our imperfect nature, and also the unjust and imperfect laws and barbarous customs, which have been introduced into the world, and with which mankind have been afflicted in all ages, such a work might

have been of inestimable value in checking evil at the root, and preventing much that has followed; but he seems to have thought practicable moral instruction unworthy of attention, he appears to have come to the earth in displeasure, and pettishly, in a pet, to have withheld instructions which would have been of benefit to the world, and given other directions which are either impracticable or would be ruinous.

(To be Continued.)

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PLAIN-DEALING AND SINCERITY.

PLAIN-DEALING is a virtue, without which no well regulated society can exist; this all men will allow; indeed, it is so necessary, so desirable, and withal so estimable a quality, that the man can scarcely be found, who would be thought to be deficient in this noble trait of the human character. Every man tells us he likes to speak his mind; but how few speak the truth. Since, then, plain-dealing is allowed on all hands to be so indispensable, why should it not be in more general use? Why should not every man speak what he really thinks? Why should not every man be what he appears to be? It certainly must argue a deficiency of right in some part of the community, when the state of that community is such, that no one speaks his mind to his fellow-creature, but dissimulation and gross hypocrisy appear to be the order of the day. All men too seem to be desirous of hiding their faults; and appearing to others to be what they really are not; how mortifying must this be to an ingenuous mind, to live in a society where to acknowledge the genuine sentiments of his mind, to speak his opinion on all subjects unreservedly, and to appear what he really is; would be considered a species of mental incapacity, and the subject of it not fit to mix in *polite* society. The Spectator expresses himself beautifully and justly on this subject, where he says, "The candid mind, by acknowledging and discarding its faults, has reason and truth for the foundation of all its passions and desires, and consequently is happy and simple; the disingenuous person by indulgence of one unacknowledged error, is entangled with an after-life of guilt, sorrow and perplexity." In another part, speaking of sincerity, he says, "Truth and reality have all the advantages of appearance, and many more. If the show of any thing be good, the possession is better: for why does any man dissemble, or seem to be that which he is not, but because he thinks it good to have such a quality as he pre-

tends to? For to counterfeit and dissemble, is to put on the appearance of some real excellency. Now the best way in the world for a man to seem to be any thing, is really to be what he would seem to be. Besides that, it is many times as troublesome to make good the pretence of a good quality, as to have it: and if a man have it not, it is ten to one but he is discovered to want it, and then all his pains and labour to seem to have it is lost.

"It is hard to personate and act a part long, where truth is not at the bottom; therefore if any man think it convenient to seem good, let him be so indeed, and then his goodness will appear to every bodies satisfaction; so that upon all accounts sincerity is true wisdom. The arts of deceit and cunning do continually grow weaker and less serviceable to them that use them; whereas integrity gains strength by use, and the more and longer any man practiseth it, the greater service it does him, by confirming his reputation: for when a man hath once forfeited the reputation of his integrity, he is set fast; and nothing will then serve his turn, neither truth nor falsehood."

Thus far the Spectator, and who is there who will not agree in the principle, if they do not adopt the practice? It is certainly the duty of every man, as well as his advantage, to practice these virtues, and to bring them under the notice of every one with whom he has to do: what can be more praise-worthy? What more ennobling to the character of an individual? What can be of greater benefit to society? And how can we expect to reform the habits of our fellow-men, how ameliorate the condition of mankind? How eradicate the evils which afflict and debase the human species? But by bringing to their view, and enforcing on them the practice, of those virtues which are at once the blessing and the ornament of our own lives and characters. Let us then avail ourselves of every opportunity to enlighten, instruct, and inure to habits of virtue our fellow men; who have been so besotted and led away by false maxims of virtue, by tales hatched by designing men, of a chimerical after-life of promised rewards, and threatened punishments, that real morality and social virtue is scarcely to be found, and in their stead has been substituted a false, degrading, and demoralizing system of mis-named virtue, which they have called religion; and which has almost succeeded in banishing every thing that is really honourable from amongst men. To rid the minds of men of this false virtue, must be our first care; and then to replenish those minds with what is really useful, of which plain-dealing, and sincerity, are amongst the most desirable and necessary.

W. V. HOLMES.

TO THE VIRTUOUS HUMPHREY BOYLE—THE YOUNG MAN WHO HAS MADE SUCH A GOOD USE OF HIS REASONING FACULTIES, THAT ALL THE PRIESTS IN THE UNIVERSE ARE NOT ABLE TO COPE WITH HIM.

DEAR SIR,

I WILL thank you to divide the enclosed Ten Pounds (being my second subscription) equally between yourself and fellow prisoners; Mr. Joseph Rhodes, and Mr. William Holmes: with my best thanks to the latter, for the able part he took in the controversy with the Reverend Manly Wood.

I beg you will all consider this donation, as a testimony of my esteem for your self devotion in the glorious cause of free discussion, and for your fidelity, as agents, of Mr. Carlile; who, in my opinion, has already done more good than any man that ever existed.

Those, however, who are interested in the reigning idolatry, have raised the cry of blasphemy! blasphemy! The witchcraft of the day, but a sound so alarming to the great body of the people that they dare not, at present, think or reason for themselves. But as knowledge increases, the scale will turn, and then the undaunted, persevering Champion of Free Discussion—Richard Carlile—will be hailed as one of the greatest benefactors of the human race.

With every good wish for your future welfare,

I remain, your sincere Friend, and

“AN ENEMY TO PERSECUTION.”

Humphrey Boyle, Joseph Rhodes, and William Holmes, can but thank this kind unknown for his generosity; and assure him that if their humble exertions avail aught in the cause of free discussion, they will not regret their unmerited imprisonment. They are fully sensible of the value of the esteem of “An Enemy to Persecution.”

TO MR. R. CARLILE, DORCHESTER GAOL,

SIR,

November 2, 1823.

I READ with great satisfaction and pleasure the two articles in your last Republican, with the signature of "Epicurus," and agree with the writer generally in the sentiments there expressed. There is, however, one paragraph which I must dissent from, it being expressly at variance with the admirable sentiments of the other parts of his articles, and approximates near to the arbitrary and despotic actions of our audacious and worthless oppressors. I will quote what to me appears objectionable and illiberal. Article second, page 529, "I never read the Bible studiously, and have a strong dislike to it. It is my opinion, that if I did accustom myself to peruse such false literature as it is composed of, it would materially injure my style both of speaking and writing, and, as I am a young man, in my minority, or what the law terms infancy, I am determined to study none but the best modes." I am not going to defend the moral superiority of the Bible, but to object to such a sweeping clause as "Epicurus" has there compiled; and to express my dissent to his determination not to give the Bible a studious and impartial examination. What! will "Epicurus" join the phalanx of bigotry and ignorance, and deliver his judgment in condemnation of the contents of a work with which he is unacquainted; asperse it with violent declamation, and unqualified abuse, without examination or inspection? Surely, this cannot be the intention of "Epicurus:" it would be the essence of folly and madness, and at variance with the equitable and philanthropic effusions which so eminently distinguish the contemplator of nature; and the honest and sincere advocate of the right of free discussion. To condemn a work, or its contents, let them be what they may, without a calm inspection, is a great crime; and in this age of Christianity, as by law established, is too much in repute, and its pernicious and detestable consequences, are productive of a large portion of human misery. It would ill become the disciple of nature, the friend of truth, and the enemy of all established creeds, and established error, to imitate the intolerant bigot, in an indiscriminate condemnation of works they never read, never saw, and who are urged in their actions by those

who have an interest in falsehood, and whose only object is the propagation of slavish and unlimited submission to the "powers that be." "Epicurus" is afraid that a candid and attentive perusal of the Bible would injure his style, and render him unfit to aspire to higher and more correct compositions of literature; I think not, for, though the Bible is clogged with a series of the most horrid, disgusting, and filthy tales, yet this is far from being the case with the whole. In various parts of this extraordinary book, we may find some fine and high-wrought sentiments, some noble and exalted ideas; and correct delineations of men and manners, particularly in Job, in Proverbs, some part of the Psalms, and in various other parts both in the Bible and Testament: which, I think would rather assist "Epicurus" in his researches, and aid him in developing to human knowledge and comprehension, the depravity and injurious consequences of established creeds, and compulsive systems of faith.

The Bible is a book which contains weapons for all sects and parties, we may find sentences to support all opinions; and to condemn all opinions: there is no distinction of persons, the numerous sects of Christians, the Deists the Atheists, the Materialists, may separately and collectively derive a motto from its contents: in such a diversified collection, I think Epicurus may find splendid and lofty ideas, as well as gross and grovelling ones; but this will require both labour and study, and I cannot but think that he will be compensated for his labour, and not find any dereliction from his style; nor his mind less susceptible of forming correct ideas of more uniform and consistent compilations. I however, recommend, that, a petition or remonstrance be sent to his "Majesty," and the bench of lords spirituals, to request that the Bible may undergo a fresh CORRECTION and REVISION, and be rendered less filthy and immoral, and more in unity with the expanded knowledge and improved intellect of man, and the philosophical demonstrations of modern times; and that the task of its correction be confided to a select number of moral Materialists, instead of vicious and licentious priests, and put in more conformity with the present style of literature, and then I think "Epicurus" will join with me in "proving all things, holding fast that which is good."

I am, Sir, yours sincerely,
EXAMINATOR.

Note by Editor.—Examinator has mistaken the purport of the sentence used by Epicurus. It was not that he would not read the Bible at all; but that he would not imitate those who read nothing else, and whose conversation is made up of scarcely any thing but Bible expressions. It is evident that Epicurus has read the Bible sufficiently to be acquainted with its real character. But we would give him advice as to modes of writing, and have him aware, that modes are not exactly to be studied; and that imitation of style carries additional defects to those which the neglect of common sense leaves, in attending more to mode than to matter.

TO THE REPUBLICANS OF THE ISLAND OF ALBION.

CITIZENS,

THE members of the Miles Platting Reading Society, in presenting Mr. Carlile with this their seventh subscription, wish to lay before the Republicans of this Island, a brief history of their little Society; with the plan on which it is conducted, and the success which hath attended their efforts, in the disseminating such publications as are alone calculated to rescue the mind of man, from the united and usurped grasp of the tyrant and the priest. To extend the circulation of such writings *they consider* to be the only possible means to accelerate human emancipation, to dispel the thick mist of ignorance, and to burst the shackles of delusion. In doing this they are actuated by a motive purely philanthropic, and which they conceive to be the sure prelude to the establishing of a rational and equitable system of Government; founded upon the nature of man and his social rights, and which will elevate the whole human race, to that enviable situation, which nature intended they should occupy.

The members of this society wish not boast or to make a parade of what they have done, but give it publication for the purpose of shewing to the world, that though few in number, and circumscribed in means, yet by persevering exertion they have been able to render this society, in some degree serviceable to the great cause of universal liberty. The prosperous state of this Society, and the many loads of prejudice it hath cast at its feet, is a pledge of what may be accomplished by perseverance; it is a verification of the proverb, that, "constant dropping will wear away stones," and in offering this brief sketch of the progress of this society for

the perusal of the intelligent, it is with a desire to impress upon liberal minds the necessity of forming themselves into small societies, similar to this, for the purpose of instructing and enlightening each other; such societies being conducted at a very small expence, and are of the greatest importance, not only for the benefit conferred on each individual member, but as forming a union for the support of sound principles and an unlimited discussion.

"The Miles Platting Reading Society," was formed in the course of the year 1820, and the few individuals who composed it, (then as now) met at the house of Mr. W. Winstanly, Kay's Yard, Miles Platting, for the purpose of clubbing their mites, in order to purchase liberal publications, and likewise for supporting those, who for a bold expression of honest patriotism might be sacrificed upon the altars of bigoted intolerance. Since the time of its commencement, not more than three years, there have been purchased 150 volumes by this Society, although the average number of the members have not exceeded twenty, and the sum total paid for these volumes amount to £50.

The plan of government which this little society have adopted is most simple, and unlike most other Reading Societies, each member has the choice of the work he wishes to purchase, so that there is no dividing of books under the plan of this Society; the members meet every second Sunday evening, and each member pays six-pence as subscription, or more if he pleases, which sums are regularly booked to his name; when there is money sufficient in the Treasurer's hands to purchase a work which some member wishes to obtain, (say "System of Nature," for instance.) The work is purchased for him, and the purchaser takes it home to read, and brings it again to the Society on next meeting night, when another member may take it home to read and bring it again in the same manner; it still continues in the society going round to the members who wish to read it, until the purchaser's contribution amounts to the price of the work, after which it remains in the society one month, when the purchaser is at liberty to take it home as private property. Each member who is absent on the meeting night is fined one penny, which goes to the subscription for Mr. Carlile; there is likewise a subscription list constantly open for Mr. Carlile to which any individual may, at any time, contribute what he pleases.

Having laid the above statement before the public, we earnestly call upon every friend to universal liberty to examine it, and give the subject a few moments serious consideration, and we doubt not but the utility of such societies will be immediately made manifest to the mind; and to those who do perceive the beneficial result, which would arise from such societies; we would say, "Go and do likewise," confident as we are, that the mental opposition must precede a successful physical opposition to tyranny, or its

effects will not be beneficial or lasting. It is also the bounden duty of every man who has the welfare of his fellow creatures at heart to assist in the supporting the victims of persecution, and to excite an abhorrence of tyrants and tyranny. The tyranny which oppresses one Individual to day, will oppress another to-morrow, so that it becomes the interest of every man to throw down his mite in the defence of virtue, in its moral struggle with vice; we grant, Mr. Carlile has done wonders in the cause of free discussion, and great has been the individual support he has received, yet had a hundred such societies *co-operated with him*, since his unjust and inquisition-like sentence, from a *Christian tribunal*; he would by this time have obtained for mankind, what can alone render them worthy the name of *free-men*, the right to "speak and write freely, what the mind and feeling dictates." The imposing tone, and change of public feeling which would take place were there an hundred such societies scattered throughout this country, would enable public opinion at once to *seize and effectually DESTROY, the blood-shedding monster PERSECUTION*. The individual support which Mr. Carlile has received, has enabled *him* to draw the monsters destructive fangs, and though it still growls hideously, yet it can no longer bite; but with the assistance of these societies, he would speedily sweep from the minds of mankind, the filth of political and religious delusion. And now while upon this subject we would ask the tyrants, what they have gained by their cruel unparaelled persecution of the family of Carlile; What have they gained by the persecution of himself and shopmen? Why they have caused in the nation a thirst for knowledge, and they have taught him the means of allaying that thirst, by disseminating his writings and publications *in spite of the Bridge Street Gang of Adventurers, in spite of the Clogherite Vice Society*, and he now circulates them throughout England and Scotland, *in defiance of all those societies*, whose only aim is to put down the rising knowledge of the people.

They have prosecuted him, (it is true) under the high sounding term Blasphemy, in order to frighten weak minds, but they have never condescended to tell us what they mean by blasphemy; leaving every person using the term to affix his own signification, and it has of late been sounded so often in our ears, from the Pulpit and the Bench, that the public have begun to distinguish it as a word of sound, and *not* of meaning, so that it has already *lost its terrifying effects*. The truth is, these men, for the better enabling them to pick the pockets of the people, wish to domineer over the consciences of men; and in their eyes, the promulgation of *knowledge is blasphemy*. To uplift the *veil of error*, and expose the *plundering horde of priests* feeding upon the very vitals of the people, is *blasphemy*; to search for truth, and refuse to pay homage to *sainted bandits* IS BLASPHEMY; we are however pleased to find

so many persons who in *this light*, glory in being BLASPHEMERS; but the real blasphemers are they who persecute under that pretext and their names will be handed down amid the curses of posterity, in the black list of persecutors, whilst their victims will be cherished and revered, so long as honesty and independence continue to be respected. Tyrants may strive, but then, they strive in vain to bind the mind of man in fetters; it will not be curbed, it will resist and overcome every attempt to bind it down to any standard: "*The mind was made to sway,*" and not all the imprisonments that can be crowded upon it, not all the tortures, no, not even the fire and faggot itself, can force conviction on the *free-born MIND*. In the person of Mr. Carlile is exhibited one of the *strongest proofs*, that the mind cannot be controuled, and happy will it be for the next and succeeding generations, that nature has formed him for the uprooting and the destroying of that worst of tyrannies, the *tyranny o'er the human mind*. All their persecutions have so far benefited him, and the cause of universal liberty; while they have been exercising their utmost means to crush him, we have seen him drawn from the common mass of mankind, and *raised far above* the reach of all the TYRANTS in Europe, shining, like a STAR, whose *rays shed knowledge* upon a world beneath; Mr. Carlile possesses an energetic and elastic force, by which his mind with all its energies opposed to the pressure of persecution, has been able to mount far above the level it would have reached, had persecution never attempted to bear it down. He now appears as a giant in intellect, whose energies are directed towards the immediate improvement of the human race. Every persecution is a fresh instance, that *liberal ideas*, once FLOATING on the *sea of intellect*, can never again be buried by the dark waves of *ignorance*; that free thoughts, once let loose, can never again be *stifled*, can never again be *enslaved*. Surely, the persecutors see this, and if they do,

Fools that they are, to hug an idle dream;

And clasp a shadow, in a vain embrace.

It is now too late to attempt to proscribe truth, they will find it impossible to check enquiry, in vain will be the attempt to annihilate virtue! Men have begun to think for themselves, the film which so long has held them in the dark has fallen from their eyes,

and they now behold with indignation, the degrading situation in which their blindness hath placed them; they do now perceive they would enjoy more real happiness, if there were not a *kingly butcher*, or *priestly juggler* in existence.

The belief in the Bible God is already shaken, and many are turning from it in disgust; If we glance but at the history of the believers in this idol, we find it every where filled with *murderous devastations, horrid wars and cruel persecutions*, and these are among the effects of this HOLY RELIGION. The feeling mind naturally asks: "Does the God of Nature require devastation for homage, or conflagration for sacrifice? Would he have groans for hymns? murderers to worship him, and a desert ravaged world for his temple? Yet such, HOLY and *faithful* generations, are your works? These the fruits of your PIETY! You have massacred the people, reduced cities to ashes, destroyed all traces of cultivation, made the earth a solitude, and you demand the reward of your labours. For myself, I solemnly affirm by all laws human and divine, by the laws of the human heart, that the hypocrite and the deceivers shall be themselves deceived. The unjust man shall perish in his rapacity, and the tyrant in his usurpations; the sun shall change his course, before folly shall prevail over wisdom and science, before stupidity shall surpass prudential economy in the delicate art of procuring to man his true enjoyment, and of building his happiness on a solid foundation*."

On behalf of the Miles Platting Reading Society,

JOHN HARPER.

* Volney's Ruins.

Manchester Miles Platting Subscription.

William Winstanly	5	0	does Mr. Carlile, but	
Cœlator	7	0	who believes if God	
W. Nelson	1	0	be so impotent as to	
The love of the Bible to			require the assistance	
its Enemy	1	0	of the Attorney General	
Robert Whalley	1	0	he is not worthy	
Thomas Woodcock	2	0	of being worshipped	2 6
James Boyle	4	6	One who thinks that	
John Woodward	1	6	Kings and Priests are	
John Tarne	3	6	a kind of useless commodity	
Alexander Parkinson	3	4	and that Society	
Charles Ridings	3	4	would be better	
William Cochrane	1	0	tered were they entirely	
James Rhone	1	6	dispensed with	2 0
A Sceptic	1	0	Thomas Kershaw, an	
Lewis Cargon	0	6	Enemy to that craft	
William Nothing	0	6	which can render us	
James Wheeler	0	6	no assistance when	
Charles Wilson	4	6	we stand most in need	2 0
Richard Parkinson	3	4	John Harper	2 0
Daniel Cochrane	3	4	A Friend	1 0
Mr. Blackshaw, Stock-			A Freethinker, T. B.	0 6
port	1	0	M. J.	2 0
Charles Thomson	3	4	David Bruce, New Inn,	
Mr. Fines	4	3	Sarrisbury Green,	
A. B. C., one who does			Hampshire	1 6
not exactly believe as				